



U.S. Department of Justice

Terrence Berg
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For Immediate Release:
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Event: Sentenced

Defendant: Eric Zeehandelaar

**CALIFORNIA MAN SENTENCED TO 14 YEARS IN PRISON FOR ONLINE SOLICITATION
OF A MINOR AND TRAVELING TO MICHIGAN TO HAVE SEX WITH
A FIVE-YEAR-OLD CHILD**

Eric Zeehandelaar, 56, was sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment for online enticement and coercion, and traveling in interstate commerce with the intent to engage in illicit sexual conduct, Acting United States Attorney Terrence Berg announced today. Berg was joined in the announcement by, Sheriff Mark Hackel of the Macomb County Sheriff's Office and Andrew G. Arena, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Detroit. The Honorable Gerald E. Rosen imposed the sentence.

The information presented to the court at the time of the plea showed that Zeehandelaar contacted a woman on the Internet seeking to have sex with the woman's child, a five-year-old girl. The "mother" was in fact an undercover law enforcement officer posing online. It took only a few days of chats before Zeehandelaar purchased an airline ticket to fly from Los Angeles to Detroit to for the purpose of engaging in sexual acts with the child. Zeehandelaar was arrested upon his arrival at Detroit Metropolitan Airport. A search of his luggage revealed condoms, a

male enhancement supplement, and various sex toys.

Acting United States Attorney Terrence Berg said, "This defendant searched the Internet looking for an opportunity to sexually abuse a little child. I can't overemphasize how important it is for parents to monitor the Internet usage of their children. The Internet unfortunately creates a means for dangerous strangers to get access to children, and their first line of defense is a vigilant and involved parent. Had this man been successful, the damage inflicted upon a child this young would have been immeasurable. Fortunately, the skill and dedication of the Macomb Area Computer Enforcement Team (MACE) was there to prevent such a tragedy."

Assistant United States Attorneys John N. O'Brien II and Kevin M. Mulcahy prosecuted this case for the United States.